



FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

DECEMBER 8, 2025

Genesis 3:9-15, 20 Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12 Luke 1:26-38

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is about Mary's conception in her mother, Anne. It marks the special time Mary is being prepared to be the Mother of Jesus. Yet she still would have to say "yes", as God would not force her to be the Mother of Jesus.

The Gospel was about her "yes."

To the mothers here, you know what Mary was about to embark on; pregnancy.

I came across a reflection on being pregnant. A good theme for our walk to Bethlehem.

Maternal "surrender"

According to one pregnant mom, pregnancy is like this: Being pregnant is to be taken over, becoming profoundly and overwhelmingly *not* in charge.

Pregnancy is to feel as if you have been invaded by a foreign yet quite intimate being. At first, you feel almost resentful that you have so little say in what is happening. But finally, you realize that surrender was your only route. Although you are the host for this new life, you know that you haven't created it. You can't "will" it to be a boy or girl. You can't decide when it will cause you to have a craving. You can't control your burgeoning body or morning sickness or hormonal rushes.

But you can surrender. You can accept the event fully, embrace it and let it start defining who you are at this time in your life.

[Ann Holmes Redding, "The Awful Birth," **The Living Pulpit**, October-December 1997.]

Surrender is not a word we readily embrace; “surrender” has connotations of giving up, of failing, of weakness. But God calls us to “surrender” our own self-centered wants and needs to be in constant control and to trust in the possibilities we have to bring his Christ to birth in our smallest, most hidden acts of generosity, forgiveness and justice, performed in the quiet of our own hidden Bethlehems and Nazareths

Mary is called by God to motherhood at very unexpected time. She would surrender her doubts and fears in order to hope — hope that God will make this work for goodness, for grace, for the fulfillment of his Kingdom of peace and compassion.

We have that same hope.

Prayer to Our Lady of Champion